

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (cancelled)

Claim 2 (previously presented): The device in accordance with claim 3, wherein the ventilating duct extends essentially parallel to a gastight pipe corridor, the pipe corridor enclosing the loading and unloading pipe.

Claim 3 (previously presented): A device for protecting a loading space of a vessel from excess pressure caused by gas leakage, the loading space comprising a hold provided with cargo pressure tanks, wherein the vessel is provided with a ventilating duct that extends along the hold and is separated in a gastight manner from remaining rooms of the vessel, and further wherein the hold is divided into hold sections, each hold section being provided with a valve compartment separated in a gastight manner from the remaining rooms of the vessel, the valve compartment enclosing at least one shut-off valve which is arranged to shut off a pipe connection between a loading and unloading pipe and at least one of the cargo pressure tanks.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The device of claim 2, wherein the hold communicates with the ventilating duct through at least one automatically opening valve.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The device of claim 3, wherein the valve compartment communicates with the ventilating duct through at least one automatically opening valve.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A device for protecting a loading space of a vessel from excess pressure caused by gas leakage, the loading space comprising a hold provided with

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cargo pressure tanks, wherein the vessel is provided with a ventilating duct that extends along the hold and is separated in a gastight manner from remaining rooms of the vessel, and further wherein;

the ventilating duct extends essentially parallel to a gastight pipe corridor, the pipe corridor enclosing a loading and unloading pipe; and

the pipe corridor communicates with the ventilating duct through at least one automatically opening valve.

Claim 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (currently amended): The device of claim 6, ~~wherein the~~comprising a valve compartment that communicates with the ventilating duct through at least one automatically opening valve.